

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of August 23, 2016

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Nathan Freeman (absent), Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, Arlington Supplee (Board of Listers), Colin T. Bright, Lydia Petty, Karen Grace (Brown Public Library), Dominic Spillane, Rebecca Pearish, Simon Pearish, Renée Beebe, Steve Davis, Maryann McGinnis (Brown Public Library), Jerry Tabor (Tabor Earth Extractors), Courtney Tabor (Tabor Earth Extractors), Maryann Beaupré, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

- a. **Arlington Supplee, Board of Listers: 2016 Grand List Errors & Omissions.** Mr. Supplee would like the Select Board to adjust the 2016 Grand List in order to accommodate two developments not known when the Grand List was lodged. In one case, the Listers were unaware that a dwelling was being built upon a parcel so Mr. Supplee would like its value raised from \$35,000 to \$127,000. In the other case, the Listers were not informed that a mobile home had been removed from a property, which would lower its value from \$20,900 to \$0. If approved, these changes would result in a Grand List net increase of \$71,100. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve Mr. Supplee's recommended changes to the 2016 Grand List. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- b. **Colin T. Bright: Brown Public Library (BPL) Safety Concerns.** Mr. Bright served as a Village Trustee for a number of years so he is well acquainted with several of the current Select Board members. Like many Northfield residents with young children, he has found our local library to be an invaluable resource. However, over the past year he has increasingly noticed water stains on the ceilings and the situation has gotten worse over the past month with ceiling tiles falling down. No one has been hit yet but he is concerned that this might happen should the current situation be allowed to continue. Manager Schulz said that he and the Select Board members have been aware of problems with the Brown Public Library's roof for some time. He added that it has gotten worse since this spring. Some roof patching has been done that alleviated a few but not all of the problems. Burrell Roofing then was brought in to repair more problem areas and it was their recommendation that the roof be replaced. Since they left, some additional leaks have developed, mostly around the children's reading area. Manager Schulz has asked that this area be cordoned off until Burrell Roofing is able to return to effect additional repairs.

Mr. Bright noted that the municipality recently signed a contract with a construction firm (Lajeunesse Construction) for BPL roof repairs. Manager Schulz said that the work contract focuses on the older part of the building and not the newer extension that houses the children's reading area, the Community Room, etc. However, he will ask Lajeunesse to look at the problems in the new wing. Mr. Bright asked if other contractors have been contacted. Manager Schulz said that he has not but might have to if Burrell Roofing does not return soon. Mr. Bright is concerned that cordoning off certain areas of the library might present additional safety concerns should the building need to be evacuated in a hurry, etc.

Selectman Gadbois said that the Select Board has been made aware of BPL problems for some time but the main holdup has been funding. The cost of a new roof has estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$75,000. Mr. Bright asked if there were any funds on hand to cover this. Chair Maxwell said Finance Director Laurie Baroffio would be providing a budget update later in the meeting so we should have a better idea then. He added that the process to address the problems in the older section of the building took longer than expected because of efforts to partially fund the project with historic structures grant money. Unfortunately, the grant application turned out to be unsuccessful. Chair Maxwell now would like Manager Schulz to work with the BPL Board of Trustees to address the building's immediate safety concerns while exploring long-term solutions. He added that the library is a major municipal asset so this should be a management priority.

Mr. Bright asked if the municipality would be considering any temporary patching as a quick fix. Selectman Gadbois would like another roofer contacted in the next day or so in order to get this done. Mr. Bright would not like to see this process drag on and have the aforementioned cordoning become a permanent feature. He believes that parents and other BPL patrons feel the same way as he does and might support Select Board attempts to obtain additional funds through a Special Town Meeting, etc. Lydia Petty also noted that when rainwater lands on the non-carpeted areas, definite slippage hazards are created. Rebecca Pearish said that she was concerned when she heard that the children's section would be cordoned off. The BPL has become an important part of her daughter's life. Simon Pearish also would support any effort that would resolve this matter. He and his family are new to Northfield but they already have made much use of the facility. Chair Maxwell is grateful to Mr. Bright and the others present tonight for stressing for the Select Board the need to get moving on this. He promised that action would be taken sooner rather than later.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **August 9, 2016 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #05-17.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #05-17 in the amount of \$86,003.66. Selectman Doney asked about a number of tree-trimming invoices from Davey Tree Service. Chair Maxwell said that a few years ago the Village Trustees decided the Northfield Electric Department (NED) should be pro-active in having trees cut back when they got too close to power lines. This has helped reduce the number of NED power outages that might otherwise result in fines from the Public Service Board. Selectman Goslant saw an invoice from Hard Rock Gravel LLC and did not know who that was. Manager Schulz said that they used to do business on Messier Hill Road as "Tomco Excavating." Chair Maxwell saw a \$1900 bill for service on the Volvo extractor for "non-warranty" work. Manager Schulz confirmed that unexpected repairs had to be done that did not fall under warranty. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #05-17A.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #05-17A in the amount of \$197,542.51. Finance Director Baroffio explained that this warrant covered the refinancing of two bank notes. One was for the final four (4) years on a ten (10) year RSMS Bond Anticipation Note. The other is a grant anticipation note for the FEMA-funded Fairground Road Bridge Replacement project. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through August 14, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$89,038.99. Selectman Doney asked why there was about \$1900 of Northfield Police Department (NPD) overtime for this pay period. Manager Schulz said that some NPD officers were taking summer vacation time and that requires other officers to cover for them. This often results in overtime expense. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **FY 2015/2016 Financial Statements.** Chair Maxwell stated that management has provided draft financial statements that indicate revenues and expenditures by department, etc. for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2016. Manager Schulz noted that these are not the final numbers since the professional outside audit still needs to be done. Manager Schulz stated that in the Town General Fund, even though some departments do show deficit spending, there is an undesignated fund balance of \$143,983.86.

Chair Maxwell noted that the Northfield Police Department (NPD) was \$38,437 over budget even though NPD Chief James Dziobek provided the Select Board with numerous assurances that his budget would be on or under budget by the end of the fiscal year. Manager Schulz stated that most of the overage was due to unexpectedly high personnel expenses, i.e., overtime, health insurance, etc. When there had been indications of a possible overage, Manager Schulz had installed a spending freeze for the NPD with all major purchases subject to his approval. He believes that this action did limit the overage and he also has been working with Chief Dziobek regarding personnel expenses. Chair Maxwell felt that the FY 2015/2016 NPD budget amount approved by the voters should have been sufficient and he wants something done to prevent this from happening again.

Manager Schulz said the Highway Department had an undesignated fund balance of \$235,824.84. There were many factors responsible for this including lower personnel costs; low gasoline and diesel prices; cost savings on road materials; etc.

Selectman Doney asked how the NPD budget was performing in the current fiscal year. Manager Schulz said after almost two (2) months, it appears to be in good shape. As indicated earlier, there have been additional overtime costs due to summer vacations, etc. Selectman Doney would like the previous spending freeze reinstalled with Manager Schulz having to approve major NPD purchases. This department doesn't seem to be able to stay within its approved budget and he would like Chief Dziobek informed of this spending freeze in writing. Chair Maxwell also would like this done.

Selectman Gadbois asked what the total amount of the FY 2015/2016 budget surplus. The draft total amount is \$294,946.81. Manager Schulz said that he would prefer not to spend this entire amount. In the past, the Accounting Department has tried to keep an amount equal to about two (2) months of operating expenses on hand in case of emergencies.

Chair Maxwell thanked Manager Schulz and Ms. Baroffio for their report. He is looking forward to receiving the final audit report. Ms. Baroffio said that the contacted auditors would be coming to Northfield in a couple of weeks to start the audit. The first draft audit should be ready in October with the final version completed and distributed by November. However, we should have a good idea of the numbers by the end of September.

- b. **Ambulance Bill Abatements.** Manager Schulz said that the Select Board has been provided a listing of ambulance bills to be abated. Unpaid bills do go to a collection agency but there are some that turn out to be uncollectable. Ms. Baroffio noted that all the bills under consideration for abatement have been at the collection agency for at least twelve (12) months. Chair Maxwell asked how the total abatement amount (\$19,304.08) compared to previous years. Manager Schulz said that there was not much difference. Ms. Baroffio added that the Northfield Ambulance Service budget does take into account these bad debts. Selectman Goslant asked if the new outside billing agency affected the total amount. Ms. Baroffio said that all the bills under question predated the contract with Lyndonville Ambulance. Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the ambulance bill abatements. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- c. **Winter Sand & Crushed Gravel Bid Proposals.** Manager Schulz said the Highway Committee met with him and Highway Foreman Trent Tucker to discuss these bids along with possible paving projects. There was a prolonged discussion over whether the municipality should contract out the hauling of road material from the suppliers' pits to Northfield or whether Highway Department employees should do this work themselves. Mr. Tucker was strongly in favor of keeping this work in-house. Selectman Goslant added that there also was a consensus at the meeting that the bidding process should be revised in future years. There was a recommendation to award the winter sand bid to Tabor Earth Extractors and the crushed gravel bids to Pike Industries.
Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to award the winter sand bid to Tabor Earth Extractors for a pit price of 11.50 per cubic yard. **Motion passed 4-0-0.** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to award the ¾" crushed gravel bid to Pike Industries for a pit price of \$10.80 per cubic yard and the 1¼" crushed gravel bid to Pike Industries for a pit price of \$12.30 per cubic yard. Selectman Goslant noted that part of the long discussion focused on whether what Pike Industries provides is really crushed gravel or crushed slate. This distinction will need to be clarified when the bidding process is changed. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- d. **Road Paving Recommendations.** As authorized by the Select Board at the last meeting (08/09/16), Manager Schulz has signed a contract with Pike Industries to provide a shim coat on about seven thousand feet (7000') of Union Brook Road for \$99,000. This work should be completed by the end of September. At their meeting, the Highway Committee did discuss paving other roads but decided to postpone any decisions until the Highway Department's FY 2015/2016 budget surplus was determined. Manager Schulz feels that prior year surplus funds should only be used to pave areas that constitute real safety hazards. Chair Maxwell feels that it is important that Union Brook Road, which everyone agreed was in the worst condition, will be addressed this construction season. Selectman Goslant noted that Winch Hill Road also is in bad condition. Chair Maxwell agreed that repaving this road should be the next priority.
- e. **Zoning Administrator Vacancy.** Manager Schulz said that several applicants have been interviewed and two (2) have already gone before the Planning Commission. Some work still needs to be done but Manager Schulz expects that there should be a recommended candidate for Select Board approval soon.
- f. **Appointment of Health Officer.** Manager Schulz noted that after former Health Officer Mark Podgwaite resigned last month, the Vermont Health Department appointed Chair Maxwell as interim Health Officer until a permanent replacement was found. Deputy Health Officer Lawton Rutter subsequently agreed to serve. Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to appoint Lawton Rutter as Health Officer. **Motion passed 4-0-0**

- g. **Bond Anticipation Note (FY 2010/2011 RSMS).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$120,000 at 1.89% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. Chair Maxwell said that this note is being refinanced at a different bank at a lower annual interest rate. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

VIII. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Nighttime Police Patrols, etc.** Selectman Doney lives on North Main Street and he often hears young people driving their cars or pickup trucks past his residence with a lot of excess noise. He would like more NPD nighttime patrols in order to address this problem. He also would like to see the work logs that NPD officers provide so it can be determined how much time they spend in the Police Station as compared to being on the street. In addition, he would like the NPD cruisers cleaned up before they go on the road. There are heated garages at the Police Station so there is no reason why this can't be done. He would like the NPD to take better care of its equipment in general.
- b. **Plan to Remove Trees from Town Right of Way.** Selectman Goslant asked if Limlaw Pulpwood & Chipping was still planning to come to Northfield to do the test work on Winch Hill Road. Manager Schulz confirmed that they would be coming right after Labor Day. If this tree removal is done to everyone's satisfaction, Limlaw will move on to other roads with overgrown foliage. Mr. Tucker already has reached out to property owners living on the backroads under consideration.
- c. **Recognition of Finance Director Laurie Baroffio.** Selectman Goslant understands that last week Manager Schulz and the municipal employees celebrated Ms. Baroffio's twenty-five (25) years of service to Northfield. He would like to add his own congratulations. Chair Maxwell agreed that Ms. Baroffio has been a great asset to the community.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. There were no questions regarding Manager Schulz's report.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Renée Beebe, Sewer Backup Problem.** Ms. Beebe lives on Winter Street and last month (07/12/16) the municipal sewer backed up into her house, causing a great deal of damage to the ground floor. Ms. Beebe filed a claim soon after with the Town's insurance carrier (Vermont League of Cities & Towns) but still has not been contacted by them. She was informed by Manager Schulz that the property owner is responsible for the sewer pipe once it leaves the Town's right-of-way and she does not feel that this is fair. Chair Maxwell said that there is a separate Water and Wastewater Commission that oversees the day-to-day operation of the Water and Sewer Departments. He suggested that Ms. Beebe might address them directly at their next scheduled meeting regarding her concerns. He added that even though the utility employees try to do the right thing for their customers, there are rules and guidelines in place that determine levels of responsibility, etc. Chair Maxwell also suggested that Ms. Beebe work with Manager Schulz on this. Manager Schulz said that he would put Ms. Beebe on the next Utility Commission's agenda when the meeting date has been determined. (The regular meeting date for September 2016 falls on the Labor Day holiday so it will need to be rescheduled.) Selectman Goslant noted that each three-member Utility Commission has one Selectman serving on it so that the Select Board is kept aware of any developments. Ms. Beebe said she has contacted a lawyer in order to expedite the process. Manager Schulz confirmed that the insurance claim has been filed with VLCT and it is being processed. He really cannot comment further on this since there now is a possibility of litigation. Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Beebe for bringing this matter to the Select Board's attention.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a personnel matter with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:30 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:45 p.m. No action was taken.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of September 13, 2016.